

## English Jottings.

It just seems like yesterday when, armed with a complimentary order, I entered the vast arena of Olympia and took possession of a commodious box from whence to see "the greatest show in the world." The business began by the greatest showman, P. T. Barnum, driving in state around the course, which was several courses rolled in one—a triumphant progress, during which the big exploiter leant well forward "hatting" the public right and left, every "hat" evoking a wilder cheer, which, in its turn, demanded a more effusive hat. But "the greatest show in the world" was not the high success its merits seemed to warrant. In fact, Olympia was too big even for it, and when things are too big for easy pleasure they become an offence. Several separate entertainments were carried on at one and the same time, so that the vast audience might, in its many sections, never be out of it. But that is just what they were. The performances had to be divided and while one portion followed the aerial flights of the acrobatic young lady, another watched the feats of the elephant. Afterwards these portions wished they had changed places—they wanted to see both parts, and naturally that which they did not behold took on it added charms. Mr. Barnum was quite a genial little showman, and never above his business. In fact, he did not rise with his money bags. He was in the business over sixty years. He began with buying a museum, which, in his ownership, developed into a variety show of ever-increasing dimensions and attractions. His first "wonder" was a stuffed mermaid, which was received by the credulous public in all faith, nothing doubting. It was originally bought in Japan, and our recent intimate knowledge of the resources of that wonderful country has enabled us to explain that hybrid performance. The ingenuity with which the Japs manufacture the contents of a new Noah's Ark is wonderful. Following at a respectable distance this "nor fish nor flesh," came the most beautiful voice on the earth—that of Jenny Lind. In 1849 the Swedish nightingale went over to the States, and Barnum "ran her." Her nettings out of 95 concerts were £35,000. Barnum's gross receipts, deducting Jenny Lind's pay was £100,000. The highest price paid for a ticket was £130. Tom Thumb was invented by Barnum. Poor little Tom, he became a familiar figure on this side also, but it was Barnum who made him what he was, educated him and brought him out. We all remember the Jumbo episode, how the great showman bought him, how Jumbo died, and how his skeleton brought in a revenue when exhibited. His career all through was eminently successful, and he claimed with good cause to have amused and instructed more persons than any other manager who ever lived.

The already almost unlimited number of treasures in that home of priceless "effects," the Vatican, has been recently added to by the arrival from a leading London house of a magnificent piano, valued at five hundred guineas. The case, ornamented in the Martin style with floral decorations, and varnished with the Vernis Royal, is almost enough to ensure the fracturing of the Tenth Commandment by those who have seen the instrument, while the "business" part, upon which it is needless to say every improvement that science or experience could suggest has been expended, can only be described as perfection. It is really an instrument of music as distinct from a musical instrument. I have seen it, and its tone is really magnificent. This truly royal piano is a gift to his Holiness from Mr. Brinsmead, the eminent maker, who, hearing that the Vatican did not possess amongst its

treasures an English piano, at once determined with commendable patriotism that the reputation of England in this respect should be worthily sustained in the land of music itself.

A very interesting member of society is the old gentleman of 72, said to be very wealthy and to live in exceedingly good style in his own house at Brighton, who was arrested on Friday with three others at Calais, on suspicion of being the perpetrators of two robberies—one committed three or four months ago on the railway between Ostend and Brussels, when the amount stolen totalled up to the nice little sum of two million francs; and the other dating back seven or eight years, the scene of operations being the Brighton steamer running from Newhaven to Dieppe, and the loss amounting to £30,000. The Brighton resident is the only member of the four yet identified, but he is recognized as having been convicted several times in England and once in France, when he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. The capture of these gentry was very cleverly effected by English and French detectives. Upon the quartet were found false keys, wax impressions of locks, and packets of wax used for modelling purposes. There is reason to believe that the accused possess false keys of nearly all the iron safes on board the steam packets, and that they have been habitually stealing therefrom.

Shall Tommy Atkins marry? This is the burning question which has divided the Church as represented at the recent Convocation of York. The Bishop of Manchester, in view of the short service system, advocated celibacy, while "My Lord" of Chester earned the blessings of every nursemaid in the empire by stolidly declaring for military matrimony—not militant matrimony, *bien entendu*. But what, indeed, have bishops to do with this matter? Have not Mrs. Mona Caird and the *Daily Telegraph* a vested interest in all questions affecting the married state? If so, an injunction to restrain the episcopal intermeddling should be speedily issued.

A BUDDHIST religious ceremony was celebrated the other day in Paris for the first time. It took place at the Musée Guimet, which is as nearly like a Buddhist temple as it is possible for a building erected by Europeans to be. A distinguished assembly witnessed the gorgeous ceremonial performed by two Japanese Bouzes, Koidz-nnn-Rioutai and Yoshitsura-Hegen, who are making a tour through France, England, Italy and Spain. These two priests were sent by the Mikado to Constantinople on a Japanese man-of-war for the purpose of conducting to the sultan the surviving sailors of a Turkish vessel which was conveying to His Majesty the Emperor of Japan the grand cross of the Osmanieh, and which had been wrecked in the China Seas. Their mission once accomplished the two Bouzes thought it as well to make a little trip round Europe, and set forth for Paris. So delighted were they with the Musée Guimet that they entreated M. de Millone, the director of this beautiful museum, to allow them to celebrate the Feast of Han-on-Kan or Sin-Ra, in the rotunda containing the tabernacle. This request was at once granted, and many members of Parisian Society had the luck of being present at a real Buddhist religious ceremony with all its pomp and wealth of poetical detail.

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